Appendix J

Glossary of Terms

ANSI.SYS: by including ANSY.SYS as a Device in the CONFIG.SYS file, DOS will use the Extended Screen And Keyboard Control, which in turn will give any program greater flexibility over input from the keyboard and output to the screen.

ASCII: An acronym that stands for American Standard Code for Information Interchange is a standard format for representing characters. Using this format allows different programs to share data, such as when you create a file with your data entry program and later send the data to the main frame to process it with a different program.

AUTOEXEC.BAT: This is a batch file that executed automatically by DOS when the system is started and contains some commands that you may wish to execute automatically when the computer is turned on or re-initialized (re-booted).

Batch Files: In the DOS environment, it represents a file that contains a series of DOS commands, much the same as a program. The term batch file, may also refer to a group of data records that are ready to be sent to the main frame.

CONFIG.SYS: This file is used by DOS at start up (when you turn on your computer) to simplify the process of configuring or fine tuning your system.

Database: A collection of information that is organized so that it can be readily manipulated and sorted. Certain database packages have created a special format, identified with the extension DBF, with certain proprietary attributes that make data manipulation very easy.

DBF: Extension that designates that a file is a database file and not a text file. These files can only be read by database programs.

Default: The start-up settings for your system. In TIP they can be set up to specifically suit your needs and may be changed as frequently as needed. The default fills certain fields with the data that is most commonly used.

Device: Device refers to any disk drives, printers, screen monitors and other equipment that is attached to your computer. To be able to make special use of these devices, the DEVICE = command can be included in the CONFIG.SYS file. Support programs used to handle unusual devices are called "device drivers".

Directories: Directories are lists of files that are stored on a disk. The directories themselves are files that contain location and size information about other files on the disk. These other files may be directories themselves (called subdirectories).

Disk Drive: The device that holds a disk, retrieves information form it and saves information to it.

Disk: An information storage medium consisting of a flat, circular magnetic surface on which information can be recorded in the form of small magnetized spots, similar to the way sounds are recorded on tape.

DOS: An acronym that stands for Disk Operating System. It is the software that enables the computer to control and communicate with disk drives and other devices.

Field: A single piece of information of one type that is contained in a record. For example, in an address file, the NAME would be on filed, the ADDRESS another, etc.

File: A file is an organized collection of information that is accessed according to its physical location in the microcomputer. It contains related information.

Flag: Is a "switch" that is set on or off within programs, such as yes or no questions. For example, in your TIP system, when the data has been transmitted, a flag is set to True(T), and is otherwise set as False(F).

Flopy Disk: A disk made of flexible plastic, as compared to a hard disk, which is made of metal. The term floppy is now usually applied only to disks with thin, flexible disk jackets, such as 5.25-inch disks. With 3.5-inch disks, the disk itself is flexible but the jacket is make of hard plastic.

Hard Disk: A disk made of metal and sealed into a drive or cartridge. A hard disk can store very large amounts of information compared to a floppy disk. The term Hard Drive, although not as accurate, is also used.

IBM Character Set: This character set allows your printer to interpret certain commands sent to it by a program as graphics characters such as lines, double lines, corners. Please refer to your printer manual for information on how to change the character sets

Index File: A file containing a list or table of entries that identifies the sequence or record ordering of a database file, and allows the programs to access the data very quickly. The are used by the computer the same way you may use the index of a book to go directly to a desired topic.

Input: Information transferred into a computer from some external source, such as the keyboard, a disk drive or modem.

Memory: A hardware component of a computer system that can store information for later retrieval.

Menu: A list of choices presented by a program, from which you can select an option.

Path: Most DOS commands look only in the specified drive and directory when searching for DOS commands or batch files. A path allows the user to specify alternative directories to be searched when a given command or batch file is not found in the current directory. The path

command can be set in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file so that necessary files are always available to the system.

Pick List: It is a scrollable list of items from which you may make a selection.

Record: Each unit of information that comprises a File.

Scroll: To move through the contents of a window of scrollable list(pick list) so that a different part becomes visible and can be highlighted.

Search Value: An item that you are trying to locate.

Software: The programs that give life to your computer.

Target Drive: The disk drive to which you will be sending data from another source.

Template: A predefined set of instructions designed to customize your program.

Toggle switch: A toggle switch is like a light switch: it has only two possible settings, on or off. It generally means that by pressing a key you may turn an option or a setting on or off.

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